

BOSTON, JAN. 4, 1875.

DEAR DR. CLARKE :

The intelligence of the death of your highly beloved and truly venerable father, in the 91st year of his age, has just reached me. Great is my regret that bodily infirmity will prevent my attendance at the funeral, so that I might give some expression to my estimate of his valuable services in the cause of freedom and humanity ; and also to those feelings of affection and sympathy which a warmly reciprocal friendship of forty years duration naturally awakens.

When the anti-slavery banner was first unfurled to the breeze, he was among the earliest to rally under it ; and throughout the long and desperate conflict to secure the liberation of those in bonds, no one exhibited a serener front in the midst of fiery trials, or stood his ground more courageously, or more cheerfully subjected himself to the losses and crosses attached to a profession of radical abolitionism, or at all times more sympathetically remembered those in bonds as bound with them, than himself. Habitually gentle in spirit, the fear of man he knew not. Speaking the truth in love, he spared not the guilty oppressor or his accomplice. By temperament and self-control averse to all wrangling, and wishing as far as possible to be at peace with all men, he nevertheless was ready for whatever of discord, alienation, tumult, mobocratic violence, or personal odium might result from a hearty support of the claims of an oppressed and down trodden race. Kneeling reverently at the shrine of Freedom, his heartfelt language was—

“ Who calls thy glorious service hard?
Who deems it not its own reward?
Who, for its trials, courts it less
A cause of praise and thankfulness?

It may not be our lot to wield
The sickle in the ripened field;
Nor ours to hear, on summer eves,
The reaper's song among the sheaves:—

Yet where our duty's task is wrought
In unison with God's great thought,
The near and future blend in one,
And whatso'er is willed is done ! ”

But here the special marvel is, that while your father had completed his half a century before the anti-slavery movement was fairly launched, which he so promptly espoused, and while even the youngest of its adherents might not reasonably hope to live to witness its triumph, his life was prolonged a whole decade after the year of jubilee had been proclaimed. In view of such a wonderful deliverance, the very sentiment of aged Simeon was his—“ Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace ; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.” He was permitted not only to sow the seed, but to use the sickle, and to shout “ Harvest home.”

“ Ring and swing.
Bells of joy ! On morning's wing
Send the song of praise abroad !
With a sound of broken chains
Tell the nations that He reigns,
Who alone is Lord and God ! ”

Among the scoffing charges brought against the Anti-Slavery pioneers, was this—that they were “ men of one idea ;” i. e., that they made such a hobby of the negro's enslavement as to be blind or indifferent to other questions vital to the interests of all classes. But the reverse of this was the fact ; for while it was true that they felt called to make a special consecration of their time, means and energies to the work of delivering the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, they were among the most decided friends of temperance, peace, moral reform, the abolition of the gallows, equality of rights, irrespective of sex, religious liberty of dissent and non-conformity, &c., &c. In all these matters your venerable father stood in the front rank—a searcher for truth as for hidden gold, rejoicing in every fresh ray of light for better guidance, open to conviction while steadfast to principle, and calmly awaiting “ the safe appeal of truth to time.”

That he merited the appellation of “ the good physician,” I need not say. Skillful and judicious in his practice, he carried with him into the sick chamber never failing tenderness, sympathy and benignity, so that the sufferer felt that a benediction had fallen upon him.

By those who knew him well, he was equally revered and beloved ; and to them his memory will ever be precious.

Let me make a brief summary of his life and character. It is contained in the Sermon on the Mount ; for he hungered and thirsted after righteousness, he was meek and merciful, he was pure in heart, he was a peace-maker, and certainly he was blessed in receiving his portion of the obloquy which was so long and so bitterly poured out upon those who insisted that to turn a human being into a chattel was a sin of the first magnitude.

“ Finished his work, and kept his faith
In Christian firmness unto death ;
And beautiful as sky and earth,
When autumn's sun is downward going,
The blessed memory of his worth
Around his place of slumber glowing ! ”

Fraternally yours,

WM. LLOYD GARRISON.

*To Dr. Clarke,
Fall River, Mass.*

